

# WHICH PATIENTS ARE INCLUDED IN THE HCAHPS SURVEY?

Though HCAHPS (Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems) is a CMS initiative, it includes more than simply Medicare beneficiaries. The HCAHPS guidelines outline the following eligibility requirements and exclusion restrictions for patients:

## ELIGIBLE PATIENTS:

- 18 years or older at time of admission
- One overnight stay in hospital
- Non-psychiatric MS-DRG/principal diagnosis at discharge
- Alive at discharge

## EXCLUSIONS:

- “No-Publicity” patients
- Court/Law enforcement patients
- Patients with a foreign home address
- Patients discharged to hospice care
- Patients who are excluded because of state regulations
- Patients discharged to nursing homes and skilled nursing facilities

The obvious, and perhaps largest, population not captured in the HCAHPS survey is the youngest – pediatrics. But as outlined above, there are several other groups excluded that may make up a considerable percentage of your discharges.

Outside of the pediatric patients, many of these categories are not likely to dramatically alter the hospital-wide population from which the sample is drawn. That being said, many of these categories may impact individual *units* unequally. For example, a unit with a large percentage of patients discharged to hospice care may not be adequately represented in the HCAHPS data. Don't feel the need to spend too much time on these marginal differences, but keep in mind that these subtle differences may explain relative inconsistencies you see in the collected data.

